
Private Lands Program Mission

A program designed to create, improve, and protect wildlife habitat and other natural resources on Iowa's private lands.

Private Lands Biologists

Kevin Andersen Area 5
(641) 472-8411

Vacant Area 3
(319) 422-6201

Chad Paup Area 4
(641) 322-3304

Vacant Area 2
(515) 295-6073

Kathy Koskovich Area 1
(712) 943-8297

Wildlife Specialists

Josh Gansen (515) 993-3911
Helga McDaniel (641) 774-8011
Maury Muhm (712) 336-3425

LIP Coordinator

Kelly Smith (515) 281-6247

Upland Research Biologist

Todd Bogenschutz
(515) 432-2823

GIS Specialist

Monica Ulman (515) 281-8270

AmeriCorps Habitat Specialists

Curt Goettsch (319) 882-4252

Wetland Specialist

Bryan Buekema (641) 923-3518

Wildlife Bureau

Private Lands Program

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Rotating Editor, Kathy Koskovich

General CRP Signup 29

Signup for the latest General CRP was held August 30 to September 24, 2004. USDA authorized CRP enrollment increase to 39.2 million acres. Previous CRP enrollment cap was at 36.4 million acres. In Signup 29, USDA selected 1.188 million acres of the 1.672 million acres offered. *This was one of highest acceptance rates in the history of CRP, 76% of the bids offered were accepted!* All offers were ranked on the same basis and offers with an EBI score of at least 248 were considered acceptable for enrollment. The EBI average for this sign-up was 287. The average EBI acceptance cutoff score for the previous sign-ups were 247, 245, 246, and 269 in the 26th Sign-up. The average rental rate per acre was \$50.24. USDA received just over 26,000 offers and accepted 19,732. Offers accepted under this sign-up may become effective either Oct 1, 2005, or in the following year on Oct. 1, 2006, which ever the producer chooses. (A table showing a state by state summary of the 29th CRP Sign-up is attached at the end of this newsletter.)

IOWA GENERAL CRP SIGN-UP 29

Iowans offered 2,290 tracts and 1,969 (86%) were accepted!! *Total acres enrolled reached nearly 60,000 statewide, or approximately 95 square miles enrolled!* Over 50% of the offers accepted in Iowa will be planted to CP25 (native grasses and forbs), or CP4-D (Permanent Wildlife Habitat including native grasses, trees, shrubs, forbs or legumes). Iowa's CRP Priority Areas were the same areas used for the 26th Sign-up. (An Iowa map showing CRP 29th Sign-up results by county is attached at the end of this newsletter.)

Acreage Allocated for new CRP Initiatives!

Under Continuous CRP, The Bobwhite Quail Habitat Initiative (CP33) and the expanded Wetland Restoration Initiative (CP23A) are two new practices implemented during the 29th Sign-up. In addition, The Living Snowfence CP17A practice has been revised and expanded. Below is a summary of each initiative:

CP33 Habitat Buffers For Upland Birds

by Chad Paup

Back in September of 2004 President Bush announced the promotion of new conservation programs that would be forthcoming from the federal governmental offices. One of the announced and most talked about programs was a continuous CRP program called CP33. Field staff often refer to it as the Quail initiative. It is also called an Upland Habitat Buffer. Since that time there have been numerous discussions and arguments concerning the best applications for this program and in the end here is what Iowa has to offer.

CP33 is essentially a program that will be applied to field edges of eligible cropland. These upland habitat buffers will be established to adapted species of native, warm season grass, legumes, wildflowers, forbs, and limited shrub plantings. The width variations are from 30 feet up to 120 feet. Also, a minimum of 50% of the field shall be in eligible crops

CP33 rental payments are based on the average cash rent values and does **not** utilize the 20% incentive. This program does receive Sip (\$10 per acre/per year up front payment) and PIP (additional 40% cost share)

The standards require 20seeds/sq ft of native grasses and 20 seed /sq ft for forb/ legume component for sites that are essentially not highly erodible. For sites considered highly erodible (erosion >T) than a seeding rate of 30 seeds /sq ft of native grasses and 10 seeds /sq ft of forb/legume will be used. In addition, up to 10% of the acres can be planted to a woody species, either forbs or shrubs. Buffers cannot be used for turn rows, roads, or for storage of crops or equipment.

Ineligible Land is:

- Any type of filter/buffer strip alongside a stream shall not have a CP33 laying adjacent to it however the CP33 can "T" up to the filter/buffer strip

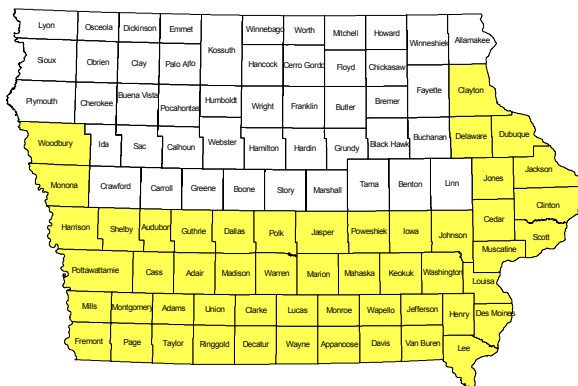
When looking at Quail characteristics it should be noted that Quail don't like to travel very far from the woody vegetation in order to find grain. In my opinion 60 to 80 feet would be a preferred width when looking at the potential best benefit for Quail. *Feel free to call me at 641-322-3304 for additional questions. We can work it out together, as I still have quite a few of my own!?*

Wetlands Restoration Initiative

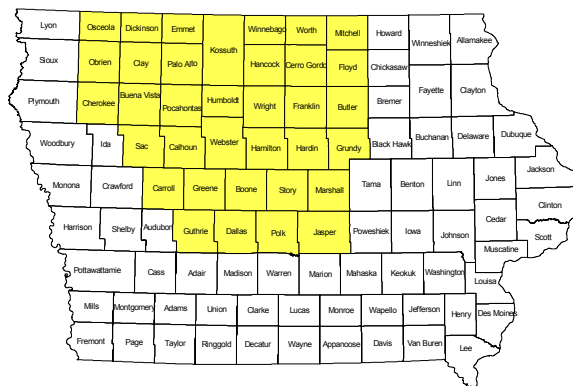
The Wetlands Restoration Initiative, or CP23A, targets wetland acres beyond the 100-year floodplain to include larger wetland complexes and playa lakes. These wetland acres cannot be eligible for the regular CP23 (Wetland Restoration *inside* the 100-year floodplain), or Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) acres. The allocated acreage for Iowa is set at 3000 acres.

Targeted counties are those in the Prairie Pothole Region of the state (see following map). Sign up is continuous. A Wetland Restoration Incentive Payment equal to 25% of the cost of restoring the hydrology of the site is available. Annual rental payments are based on the average rental rates for the county. Cost share is available of up to 50% for installation costs.

Counties Eligible For New Continuous CRP Practice
CP23 Bobwhite Buffer



Counties Eligible For New Continuous CRP Practice
CP23A Wetland Restoration



Newly Expanded Living Snowfence CCRP!

New Snow Catch Areas are eligible! For the first time, snow catch areas downwind of a living snow fence will be eligible for CCRP. These areas are seeded down to native grasses and forbs. This kind of cover can provide an added bonus for landowners interested in providing wildlife habitat while reducing snow removal costs! Generally, these snow catch areas range from 75 to 100 feet wide or more depending on the design specifications.

The Iowa DOT can benefit when living snow fences are established on selected sections of public highways. Landowners along those sections have probably already had temporary snow fences placed in their crop fields. The north and west sides of lanes, roads, railroads, and public facilities are eligible. Land must have been cropped 4 out of 6 years from 1996 to 2001.

Cost-Share

50% cost-share with a 40% practice incentive payment for establishment costs.

Rental Rate

Based on maximum soil rental rate established for three predominant soils within the snow fence and snow catch area. Contract runs from 10 to 15 years.

Sign-up Incentive

\$10/acre for each full year of the practice (Oct 1st to Sept 30th)

Design Criteria Minimums

- One row of conifers and one row of shrubs for unsheltered distances less than 1000 ft., or
- Two rows of conifers, or one row of conifers and one row of shrubs if the unsheltered distance is greater than 1000 ft.
- Plus a snow catch area of approximately 100 feet planted to native grasses

The Northwest and North Central counties in Iowa will be targeted. County FSA offices will be working with DOT, PF, DNR, CCBs, and NRCS to help promote the program. Promotion should start in January and February, 2005.

Mid Contract Management

by Chad Paup

Wildlife biologists are proclaiming the good news of one of the best programs to hit the landscape since the inception of CRP. No longer will pheasant hunters have to look enviously to the days of yester year when Iowa could unequivocally call itself number one for pheasants. If Iowa landowners are willing to tinker with the states 1.4 million acres enrolled in the General Conservation Reserve Program, wildlife will undoubtedly flourish.

Here in SW Iowa we believe that one of the best solutions to producing more birds is Mid Contract Management. MCM involves strip disking, strip spraying, interseeding, and burning. In a nutshell, fields made up of one species of grass just don't have the diversity necessary to attract insects or to provide nesting cover or brood-rearing cover for young birds. By applying a couple of the management techniques in MCM one can alter the vegetation thus provide better habitat for producing birds. By and large pheasants and quail thrive in habitat with a wide variety of plants and plenty of edge cover in the early successional stage. In the early days of CRP, fields were first planted to grass and the field was often described as being "full of weeds". It is in this early successional stage that the fields have the most potential for producing lots of birds.

Last summer DNR Private Lands Staff held 5 field days through out the SW Iowa district. Landowners and USDA staff were invited to attend and the goal was to showcase these management techniques. Topics included: Strip spraying techniques vs. strip disking. We were able to show the variability of interseeding vs.no interseeding. Fall management vs. spring management. Seed selection and seeding techniques were also discussed. All in all it was a great opportunity to get out and show the people that the proof is in the pudding!

Field days offer convincing proof that the altered vegetation is more conducive to wildlife.



Upgraded portion of field = 20 in. of cover!



P&Q dollars allocated to SE Iowa

For the fall of 2004 and the spring of 2005, the DNR Wildlife Bureau has allocated \$75,000 to be spent on pheasant and quail habitat in southeast Iowa. The area consists of 21 counties, or Area 5 under the Natural Resources Conservation Service jurisdiction. The area DNR private lands biologist is working with private landowners to draw up a working wildlife plan that will focus mainly on general CRP land to make it more attractive for quail and pheasant. Some of the practices that are being cost shared: food plots, strip disking/spraying, native grass/forb plantings, edge feathering, and prescribed burning. All practices cost shared will be 75% paid by the DNR and 25 % paid by the landowner. As of late November 31 landowners in 13 different counties had signed habitat agreements with the DNR. Over 500 acres of habitat will be manipulated with the funds that have been allocated at this time.

LIP Tour – Muscatine County 2004

On October 25th, 2004, DNR staff, landowners, and others gathered in Muscatine Iowa to tour some newly accepted Landowner Incentive Program sites. Led by Kevin Andersen and Kelly Smith, the tour started at the Big Sand Mound Preserve located adjacent to the Mississippi River. Big Sand Mound Preserve is owned by Monsanto and MidAmerican Energy and is home to several different threatened and endangered species. One of the species that will benefit from the LIP funds is the Illinois mud turtle, which uses the sandy mounds for hibernation and breeding. Some of habitat work that will be completed the site will be prescribed burning and brush management.



Big Sand Mound Preserve Tour

The next three sites toured were in the western part of Muscatine County. Lewis Peterson, Jonathan Knott, and Wayne and Bev White are the landowners also accepted into the LIP program. Native prairie restoration using local eco-type prairie mixes will be used on these sites. Prescribed burning will be utilized for habitat management and some shallow wetlands will also be restored on these sites. The main focus for LIP funds in Muscatine and Louisa counties is for habitat restoration and manipulation centering on reptiles and amphibians in the lower Iowa and Cedar River flood plains.

New Watersheds Added to Conservation Security Program 2005 Sign-up

November 5, 2004 (Article reprinted from Iowa NRCS website)

Four watersheds including parts of 32 Iowa counties are among the 202 watersheds selected for the fiscal year 2005 Conservation Security Program, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service recently announced.

The watersheds include the Turkey and Upper Wapsipinicon in northeast Iowa, North Raccoon in central Iowa and Platte, which crosses the Missouri state line, in southwest Iowa. These four watersheds include more than 3.9 million acres and 10,337 farms. Iowa was one of 22 states selected for the first CSP signup this past summer.

"This is a significant expansion of CSP in Iowa," said NRCS State Conservationist Richard Van Klaveren. "Landowners and producers in these watersheds should be looking for a signup announcement in very near future."

Later this year, NRCS will offer local workshops in the selected watersheds to more fully explain the program to interested potential participants. More details about CSP in Iowa can be found at <http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp.html>.

Van Klaveren encouraged producers and landowners in the selected watersheds to participate in a workshop to learn more about CSP and how they can get started in the self-assessment and application process. He also suggested people outside of CSP watersheds should start working with their local NRCS offices to learn how they can best prepare for CSP before the next round of watersheds are announced for FY 2006.

"Producers face critical management decisions about tillage and nutrient management that may affect their CSP eligibility," Van Klaveren said. "The sooner they get in their local office and understand the impacts of their choices, the better chance a producer can preserve his or her opportunity to participate in CSP," he said.

CSP is a voluntary program that supports ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural working lands and enhances the condition of America's natural resources. NRCS will offer CSP each year, on a rotational basis, in as many watershed as funding allows. For more information on CSP and other NRCS programs see <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>

Habitat Check-off Program Update

The Habitat Check-off Program has been working on the ground for over a year now. In that time we have been able modify the program to make the process work more seamlessly between the Iowa Native Seed Growers, the landowners, and the DNR.

One of the major changes that has been made to the Habitat Check-off Program is the distinction that it is actually two programs and giving each program its own title. The first program is **Habitat Check-off** and will remain named so. This is the program where the Iowa Native Seed Growers Association (INSGA) donates 10% of a seed sale that is accompanied with a Habitat Check-off Certificate. This money is put in a trust fund held by the IDNR and shared equally between IDNR and the Iowa Pheasants Forever Chapter. The IDNR's share of this trust fund is ours to do what we choose to with it. The IDNR chooses to use this money to provide 50% of the cost of seed for a wildlife project to

landowners. The landowner is in turn responsible for purchasing the additional 50% of the seed. This is a cost-share program run by the DNR and separate from the Habitat Check-off Program. The DNR's cost-share program has been renamed **Prairie Partners Cost-Share Program**.

During 2004 the Prairie Partners Cost-Share Program funded 49 projects with \$29,418.07 on 956.6 acres. This program generated \$58,836.14 in seed sales. This is state money that is not matched at this time with any other grant. This means it can be used to fund projects not only on private property but also with local communities and County Conservation Boards. The only requirement is that the Prairie Partners Cost-Share Program not pay for more than 50% of the seeded needed for the project. The money is allocated to the permanent Private Lands Staff for distribution to landowners. If you know of a landowner interested in utilizing Prairie Partners money please contact you local PrivateLands staff biologist.

The IDNR has applied for \$50,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to match with the Prairie Partners Cost-Share Funds to provide cost-share for other costs of seeding such as ground preparation, drilling, and mowing. We will not know if the DNR is awarded this grant until April 1, 2005. If there are questions about either the Habitat Check-off Program or the Prairie Partners Cost Share Program contact either your local Private Lands Biologist or Kelly Smith at (515) 281-6247 or kelly.smith@dnr.state.ia.us.

Landowner Incentive Program Completes First Year

The first year of on the ground funding for the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) was completed in December. The first year definitely was a learning experience. The LIP Planning Committee decided to keep the areas eligible for funding to a minimum the first year to work on getting the bugs out of program. In the first year there was \$62,937.44 spent on habitat improvements for rare species in Iowa on 24 projects that affected 340.6 acres. \$47,202.76 of that was federal LIP money and the remainder was paid for by each individual landowner.

In the hopes of implementing more projects during the second year of funding the Planning Committee has expanded the areas eligible for funding. New areas include:

- 1) All prairies and fens with state or federally listed species associated with them
- 2) Prairies located in the Upper Little Sioux Watershed
- 3) Continuous tracts of 1000 acres or greater of timber located in close proximity to Sand Creek Wildlife Management Area, Stephens State Forest, Shimek State Forest, and Yellow River State Forest
- 4) Timber Rattlesnake habitat in Madison County
- 5) Goat Prairie/Timber Rattlesnake habitat in Allamakee, and Clayton Counties
- 6) All Algific Talus Slopes
- 7) All Bird Conservation Areas (BCA's)
- 8) Savanna remnants located in Lucas and Clarke Counties
- 9) Existing Ringgold County priority area has been tripled in size

The second year of LIP brings more training for agency personnel and private landowners. Agency trainings will focus on habitat needs and management guidelines as well as identification training of rare species in Iowa. There will be a reptile and amphibian training the second week of May, a Topeka Shiner training in the end of June, and a rare plant ID training in late summer or early fall. These trainings will be open to DNR, NRCS, CCB, and DOT as well as conservation organization employees that are interested in attending. Workshops for private landowners have not been planned yet.

General CRP Sign-up 29 Numbers

STATE	29th General Sign-up					26th General Sign-up		Total Acres 26th & 29th Sign-ups
	Offers Submitted	Offers Accepted	Acceptance %	Acres Offered	Acres Enrolled	Acceptance %	Acres Enrolled	
National	26,080	19,732	76%	1,672,049	1,187,957	48%	1,995,189	3,183,146
Colorado	713	610	86%	118,700	98,200	45%	112,178	210,378
Illinois	2,402	1,681	70%	51,809	36,274	64%	132,735	169,009
Iowa	2,290	1,969	86%	71,771	61,135	53%	127,645	188,780
Kansas	3,491	3,172	91%	265,374	239,950	63%	293,989	533,939
Minnesota	1,492	1,253	84%	38,601	33,207	51%	79,451	112,658
Missouri	1,194	1,039	87%	57,326	49,746	78%	154,692	204,438
Nebraska	1,513	1,229	81%	87,778	64,692	49%	81,290	145,982
NorthDakota	1,027	344	33%	90,010	26,402	9%	21,106	47,508
SouthDakota	747	477	64%	51,449	30,157	17%	29,593	59,750
Washington	680	581	85%	102,243	83,941	74%	153,464	237,405
Wisconsin	1,380	1,045	76%	32,851	23,522	62%	63,077	86,599
Alabama	311	260	84%	12,244	10,506	64%	27,198	37,704
Arkansas	163	140	86%	9,087	7,537	63%	24,015	31,552
California	15	13	87%	2,850	2,608	33%	4,496	7,104
Delaware	2	0	0%	27	0	62%	57	57
Florida	42	41	98%	1,767	1,732	92%	8,772	10,504
Georgia	246	203	83%	9,130	7,659	70%	29,008	36,667
Idaho	258	199	77%	22,461	14,140	67%	56,072	70,212
Indiana	774	554	72%	16,955	11,751	51%	38,333	50,084
Kentucky	382	320	84%	13,656	11,699	70%	36,650	48,349
Louisiana	206	204	99%	9,989	9,895	95%	37,196	47,091
Maine	33	11	33%	1,337	472	12%	246	718
Maryland	33	19	58%	558	258	17%	378	636
Massachusetts	1	0	0%	24	0	0	0	0
Michigan	949	552	58%	29,389	16,468	42%	41,562	58,030
Mississippi	539	424	79%	29,441	23,958	70%	44,928	68,886
Montana	1,156	549	47%	216,975	105,296	22%	82,314	187,610
NewJersey	3	3	100%	59	59	84%	539	598
NewMexico	9	9	100%	1,782	1,782	58%	2,941	4,723
NewYork	176	97	55%	5,687	2,783	26%	2,824	5,607
NorthCarolina	286	240	84%	5,520	4,794	75%	10,537	15,331
Ohio	906	616	68%	21,400	13,264	48%	49,132	62,396
Oklahoma	465	411	88%	40,852	35,542	55%	43,945	79,487
Oregon	139	129	93%	29,222	28,230	78%	46,359	74,589
Pennsylvania	65	41	63%	1,747	1,068	60%	1,185	2,253
SouthCarolina	95	71	75%	2,617	1,896	47%	3,617	5,513
Tennessee	330	268	81%	9,995	8,038	84%	53,213	61,251
Texas	1,391	828	60%	198,250	112,699	22%	93,232	205,931
Utah	43	30	70%	7,239	3,936	22%	3,659	7,595
Virginia	128	99	77%	2,695	2,341	68%	3,567	5,908
Wyoming	5	1	20%	1,185	321	0	0	321

CRP Signup 29

